



Hamilton County Emergency Services

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Re: Winter Weather Preparedness

As we approach the winter season, it is important for the citizens of Hamilton County to start planning ahead for the potential threat of winter weather. To help get ready, Hamilton County Emergency Management and the Electric Power Board (EPB) are joining forces to promote Winter Awareness in November.

On Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) will be open to the media for a special presentation on winter weather preparedness from Hamilton County Emergency Management and the Electric Power Board (EPB).

EPB representatives will share important information to help customers stay safe and comfortable in their homes in the event of prolonged power outages due to severe weather events. While the automated smart grid is the community's first defense against weather-related power outages, fallen trees and downed power lines require labor intensive efforts to restore service. It is during these times when customers should be prepared for the potential loss of service:

- Stay away from fallen trees and downed powerlines!
- Report downed powerlines, damaged transformers and poles to (423) 648-1372.
- Use battery powered emergency lighting instead of candles and kerosene lanterns.
- Do not use portable power generators indoors or in garages.
- Keep a manual can opener available at home.
- Maintain an adequate supply of prescribed medications in advance of severe weather events.
- If you depend on electric powered medical devices, contact EPB before severe weather strikes.
- Cook/prepare foods on an outside grille placed at least three feet away from walls and other combustible areas.

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Because Tennessee's winter weather can be difficult to predict and can quickly become severe, we are encouraging the citizens of Hamilton County to begin preparing now before the winter weather sets in our area. Among some of the preparations include:

- ***Creating a family emergency plan and an emergency kit*** with bottled water and food that can be prepared without cooking in case of a power outage. Kits should include bottled water, canned or dry foods, battery-powered radio, flashlights, extra batteries, manual can opener and a first aid kit.
- ***Make sure all heat sources, such as fireplaces, woodstoves and oil heaters function properly.*** If you have a generator, make sure you have fuel and that your generator functions properly. ONLY OPERATE GENERATORS OUTDOORS!
- ***Creating a winter car kit.*** This includes a blanket, spare radio with batteries, snacks, jumper cables, shovel, and sand to give tires traction.

It is also important to people to stay current on weather forecasts and understand the key National Weather Service terms:

- ***Winter Storm Watch:*** indicates that severe winter weather may affect your area within 12-24 hours.
- ***Winter Storm Warning:*** indicates severe winter weather is in the area or expected immediately and can be life threatening.
- ***Ice Storm Warning:*** are issued for ice accumulation of a quarter-inch or more.

It is never too early to be prepared for winter! By preparing together for winter weather, we can make families safer and our communities stronger. Hamilton County Emergency Management is urging people to check their disaster preparedness plans now, before our community is potentially threatened by freezing temperatures, icy conditions and power outages.

Thanks,
AMY

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